

# First Flu-Related Death In Sussex County Senior; Cases Among Children And Youth Surging

**DOVER** – As influenza continues to spread across Delaware, the Division of Public Health (DPH) announces the first Sussex County flu-related death for the 2016-2017 season. The deceased was a 74-year-old female who was a resident at a long-term care facility. The Delaware Public Health Laboratory confirmed that she had been diagnosed with Influenza A and had multiple underlying health conditions. Her death brings the state total this flu season to three. The three people who died all had underlying health conditions, in addition to being ill with the flu.

Because the flu vaccine takes two weeks to take effect and the season has not yet hit its peak, DPH is reminding Delawareans that it is not too late to receive this year's flu vaccine.

This flu season is hitting children, teens and young adults particularly hard. The last week of January saw a surge in the number of flu cases among Delawareans ages 5 to 24. There were 142 laboratory-confirmed cases for the week, and more than one-third of them were in individuals in this age group. For this flu season, there have been 283 confirmed cases statewide among those age 5 to 24, with 19 requiring hospitalization. In comparison, during the same week last year, there were only nine persons in this age group who were confirmed to have the flu, and one had been hospitalized.

Last year's flu season activity did not increase until mid-March. At that time, there were 826 cases of lab-confirmed influenza. As of the week ending February 4, Delaware has

confirmed 896 cases of the flu for the 2016-2017 season, with 199 requiring hospitalization. Of the 896 confirmed cases, 511 have been in New Castle County, 226 in Kent County, and 159 in Sussex County. These numbers reflect lab-confirmed cases and the number of individuals in the community with influenza or influenza-like illnesses, is likely much higher. DPH recommends that anyone who has not yet been vaccinated against the flu this season do so immediately.

Flu vaccines are still available at DPH clinics located within the State Service Centers. A list of locations and times is available at <http://flu.delaware.gov> or by calling 800-282-8672.

Vaccines are also available at many pharmacies and grocery stores, as well as through primary care physicians and some specialists. To find participating stores, enter your ZIP code in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) flu vaccine finder at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/>.

While the annual flu vaccination is your best protection against the virus, DPH also stresses the importance of taking further precautions against the flu virus such as washing your hands regularly, especially after coughing or sneezing, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue that is immediately disposed of or coughing or sneezing into your elbow rather than your hand, and staying home from work, school, or other engagements if you are sick with flu-like illnesses which include cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue. While more common in children, some people might also experience vomiting or diarrhea. Droplets from a sneeze can travel up to six feet. You should not return to your regular activities until you are fever-free (100 degrees F [37.8 degrees C]), without fever-reducing medications for at least 24 hours.

Contact a doctor if symptoms worsen or someone has an underlying medical condition. A doctor may prescribe antiviral

drugs. Antivirals are a second line of defense to treat the flu. It can lessen the symptoms, shorten the illness, and prevent complications. However, a flu vaccine is still the first and best way to prevent the flu.

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.*

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.